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# FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON — August 4 DATE

REF : PERIPHERAL: Albania

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RECEIVED AUG 17 1953 — BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS — DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SUBJECT: PERIPHERAL: Conversation with Quai d'Orsay Official on Albanian Matters.

There is transmitted herewith a memorandum prepared in the Embassy's Peripheral Reporting Unit concerning a conversation on Albanian affairs which a member of the Unit had on August 3, 1953 with M. Jean-Marie MERILLON of the Eastern European Section of Political Affairs at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Landreth M. Harrison
Chief, Peripheral Reporting Unit

Enclosure:
Memo. as stated.

CC:

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MEMORANDUM

Conversation with Quai d'Orsay Officer

Concerning Albanian Matters.

On Monday, August 3, I had a conversation about Albanian affairs with M. Jean-Marie MERILLON

We discussed in particular the political developments which took place in Albania the latter part of July. M. Merillon stated that the French Minister to Albania, M. CASSIN, is presently in France "on leave" and so there were available no analyses or comments by him.

On the Albanian situation, M. Merillon called attention to an article appearing in the ECONOMIST (issue of July 8, 1953) as worthy of special consideration. Since he adverted again to this in concluding the conversation, it may be deduced that his section at the Ministry finds much in common with the views expressed therein.

M. Merillon rehearsed the events which came to focus in Albanian governmental decisions of July 23, 1953, as announced by the official Albanian agencies. These decisions issued from a joint session of the Executives of the Albanian Workers Party, the Council of Ministers and the Presidium of the Popular Assembly. Their chief features on the surface, according to M. Merillon, seemed to be the following: (1) an administrative reorganization and streamlining.....

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and streamlining of the central government under ten departments, (2) the release of Rago DERVISHI as Minister of Public Works and Haki TOSKA as Minister of Stockpiling, for "other important assignments," (3) the removal of Mehmet SHEHU from his post as Secretary of the Central Committee of the Workers Party although he remains a member of the Committee and retains his positions of Minister of Interior and Deputy Premier, (4) the removal of Enver HOXHA from the positions of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defense while remaining Premier.

Beyond the evident observation that these changes seem to be in line with the current policy trend in the Soviet satellite countries to minimize the power of individual officials in favor of collective leadership, M. Merillon was not prepared to venture any opinions on possible subtle significances (e.g. as regards the rivalry of Hoxha and Shehu). He mentioned the replacement of Omer NISHANI as President of the Presidium of the National Assembly, by Hadji LESHI, although he attached no special importance to this substitution.

M. Merillon also mentioned the appointment of General OUVRO-DIMTSEV as Military Attaché of the USSR at Tirana, replacing General GLEBOV, and the appointment of Basil VASILIEV as new Bulgarian Minister to Albania. According to M. Merillon, Hoxha received Vasiliev on July 4th in the first public appearance that he had made for a month.

M. Merillon discussed some information and analysis of Albanian-Soviet relations. He said that these purported to support a prevalent conjecture that Moscow was lessening its interest in Albania. Two points of "evidence" according to this data were (1) the alleged withdrawal from Albania (after the death of Stalin and before the first of June) of some 300 Soviet technicians and "experts" and (2) the alleged progressive destruction of the submarine bases at Pallona. M. Merillon emphasized that the officers of his section at the Quai d'Orsay viewed this information and opinion with considerable caution and reserve.

Horace J. Nickels
Horace J. Nickels
Attaché of Embassy

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